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SPORTS
New NWSL champion crowned
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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

CHAMPION FOR GIRLS

Nila Ibrahimi wins the prestigious International Children's Peace Prize p3

Participants at COP29 in Azerbaijan

DID YOU KNOW?
The climate change office of the United Nations was founded in 1992 and is based in Bonn, Germany.

US votes for mass transit

On November 5, voters across the US approved proposals to improve public transportation, reduce the number of cars, and decrease fossil fuel use. For example, Nashville, Tennessee, will invest $3.1 billion in bus service and 86 miles of sidewalk. Columbus, Ohio, will increase bus service by 45% and support ride sharing.

Global climate summit ends

World leaders gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11–24 for an annual conference to address climate change. About 50,000 government officials, climate scientists, youth activists, and environmental advocates attended COP29, which ended with the announcement of a controversial proposal.

What is COP29?

The event is held by the United Nations (UN, a group of 193 nations). COP stands for Conference of the Parties and includes 197 countries that have signed onto three major global climate agreements: the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. This third agreement, established in 2015, set a goal of limiting global temperature increases to no more than 1.5° C (2.7° F) higher than they were in the early 1900s. Scientists agree that any further warming would make the impact of climate change much more severe. At COP29, participating nations negotiated ways to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases (gases that stay in Earth's atmosphere and trap heat) in order to hit that target.

Simon Stiell

What was the outcome?

The main result of the conference was the creation of a proposal to help developing countries cope with the effects of climate change and invest in renewable energy, like solar and wind power. These nations with less wealth create fewer greenhouse gas emissions than wealthier countries but are most affected by climate change. COP29, which was supposed to end on November 22, was extended by nearly two days as officials held intense negotiations. In the early hours of November 24, wealthy nations pledged at least $300 billion per year by 2035 to help developing countries. This is an increase from a previous target of $100 billion but fell short of the estimated $1.3 trillion that experts say poorer nations will need. The deal also included a promise to raise the $1 trillion difference from private companies and lenders like the World Bank, which makes loans to developing nations.

How did people react?

Officials from developing nations were angered by the agreement, saying it is inadequate. Juan Carlos Monterrey, Panama's climate representative, called the deal "a complete failure." Chandni Raina, a climate official from India, said the $300 billion "will not address the enormity of the challenge we all face." She said the deal was pushed through without input from India, which has the world's largest population. Environmental leaders said the deal should have called for companies that profit from fossil fuels to contribute to the fund. However, wealthy countries said they are facing political challenges at home that made higher amounts difficult. Simon Stiell, head of the UNFCCC, said, "No country got everything they wanted, and we leave Baku with a mountain of work to do." António Guterres, the UN chief, said, "I had hoped for a more ambitious outcome.... But this agreement provides a base on which to build."

What will happen next?

COP30 will be held in 2025 in Brazil. Developing nations said they will resume the battle for more funding and insist that wealthy nations further reduce their use of fossil fuels. But many expressed concerns about US participation once Donald Trump returns to the Presidency in January 2025. He has said that he will roll back environmental regulations and pull the US from the Paris Agreement. However, John Podesta, a US official who attended COP29, said America is committed to fighting climate change no matter what.

Banana artwork sells for millions

A much-debated piece of art sold for $6.2 million in New York City on November 20. Titled *Comedian*, it is a single yellow banana duct-taped to a wall. *Comedian* made its debut in 2019 and has since become an international phenomenon, with previous editions of the work being sold for up to $1.5 million—or eaten.

Its creator, Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, has said the artwork is meant to be a satire (use of humor to question or criticize something) of the art world and the value of art. Each copy of the work comes with duct tape but no banana. A certificate of authenticity gives the owner permission to re-create the piece with a fresh banana. When the banana goes bad, it is replaced.

In the latest edition, the banana was purchased the morning of the auction at a local fruit stand for 35 cents. Hours later, business executive Justin Sun bought it for more than 17 million times that. "In the coming days, I will personally eat the banana as part of this unique artistic experience," Sun wrote on social media.

The art piece titled *Comedian*

Nila Ibrahimi

ONE HERO TO ANOTHER

"Your courage is an inspiration to girls and an example to leaders everywhere," Malala Yousafzai said to Nila Ibrahimi about her award.

Children's Peace Prize awarded

Nila Ibrahimi, age 17, received the International Children's Peace Prize for her work advocating for the rights of Afghan women and girls. The award is given by the KidsRights Foundation, which is based in the Netherlands, to recognize children who work on behalf of other young people. Past winners include climate activist Greta Thunberg and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. Winners receive an educational scholarship and money for their advocacy work.

Ibrahimi is from Afghanistan, where the rights of women and girls have been limited for many years. In 2021, she protested a local ban against schoolgirls singing in public by posting a video of herself singing online. Her protest gained popular support and resulted in the ban being overturned. Later that year, however, the country was seized by the Taliban (a military and political group with extreme views), which has restricted women's rights even more. This includes banning women from working and girls from going to school.

After the Taliban took over, Ibrahimi and her family fled Afghanistan for Canada, where they now live. She has spoken out for the right of girls to receive an education and in 2023 helped found the organization HerStory, which shares the stories of Afghan women and girls.

At a ceremony in Amsterdam, Ibrahimi received the award from Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkol Karman and sang with a choir. The prize "will mean that the voices of Afghan women and girls will echo across the world," Ibrahimi said. "We must all continue to give them strength and hope in the darkest of times."

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

CELEBRATING A BEST FRIEND

It was a big birthday for the oldest known macaroni penguin in North America, who turned 40. The bird, named Best Friend, lives at SeaWorld San Diego in California, where keepers call him the "most precious old man."

The birthday boy

Margret Chola

A GLAMOROUS GRANDMA

A grandmother has gone viral for her high-fashion looks, which are put together by her granddaughter. Margret Chola, who is in her 80s and lives in rural Zambia, in Africa, is known as Legendary Glamma online. "I didn't know I could make such an impact at this age," Chola said.

THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Retired NFL star Jason Kelce and players from his former team, the Philadelphia Eagles, released their third holiday album, *A Philly Special Christmas Party*. Proceeds will go toward children's charities and gifts for each of the 116,000 students in the city's public schools. "That's the Philadelphia spirit that I've come to know, love, and appreciate," Kelce said.

The album

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (2); LEGO; NWSL; USPS; ON RIGHT PAGE: KIDSRIGHTS FOUNDATION; GETTY IMAGES; SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO; LUXURY MEDIA ZAMBIA; VERA Y RECORDS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

A portion of the Appalachian Trail being cleared in Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest

Appalachian Trail fact file

- **YEAR THE FIRST SECTION OPENED:** 1923
- **YEAR THE TRAIL WAS COMPLETED:** 1937
- **TOTAL NUMBER OF THRU-HIKERS:** More than 21,500
- **FIRST SOLO MALE THRU-HIKER:** Earl Shaffer in 1948
- **FIRST SOLO FEMALE THRU-HIKER:** Emma Gatewood in 1955

Cleanup of the Appalachian Trail begins

A team of volunteers is working to clear a large, damaged area of the Appalachian Trail (AT). Hundreds of miles of the famous public trail remain closed after Hurricane Helene struck the southeastern US in September and caused extensive destruction to the path. The effort is being led by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), a volunteer group that manages the trail.

What is the Appalachian Trail?

The trail of more than 2,190 miles follows the Appalachian Mountains and spans 14 states from Georgia to Maine. It is a protected part of the National Park System and winds through eight national forests and six national parks. It is known as the "footpath for the people" because about 3 million people visit parts of the trail annually, including about 3,000 people who set out to walk the entire path in a single year—an achievement known as a "thru-hike."

How was the trail damaged?

The heavy rain from Helene soaked the ground, causing trees to lose their grip in the soil. As a result, trees toppled to the ground when the storm's high winds hammered the region. Park officials assessing the damage found that more than 1,000 miles had been affected, including 300 miles with "catastrophic damage" in areas near Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. It's "like the entire forest is flattened," Terry Wise, a business owner in Tennessee, told CNN. The damage affected hikers as well as local businesses because there are fewer hikers to sell food and supplies to.

How is it being cleaned up?

ATC volunteers and park workers are using saws and axes to remove fallen trees and filling large holes in the ground where the trees' root systems used to be. Some parts of the trail are so badly damaged that new routes may need to be created. The federal government said it would provide $43 million in emergency funding to repair damage to the path. While the work continues, notices will be posted to alert visitors to closures and detours.

What will happen next?

Officials don't know when the AT will fully reopen but said it is unlikely to be ready in time for the start of hiking season in March 2025. The ATC will continue to oversee the work of clearing the trail and making it safe to hike.

WORD OF THE WEEK

BANANA

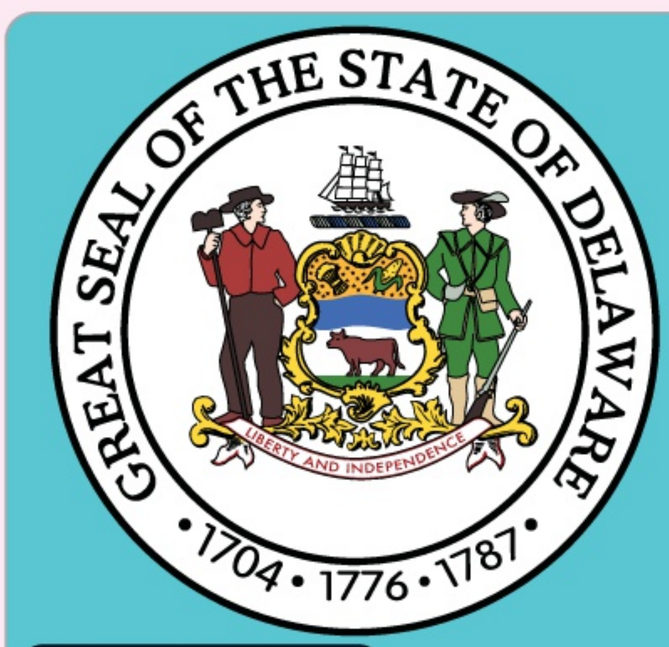
The name of this popular fruit is an example of the journey words make before coming into English. "Banana" comes from Mande, a group of languages spoken in West Africa. The word then traveled through Portuguese and Spanish before arriving in English in the 16th century.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

December 7, 1787

First state ratifies the US Constitution

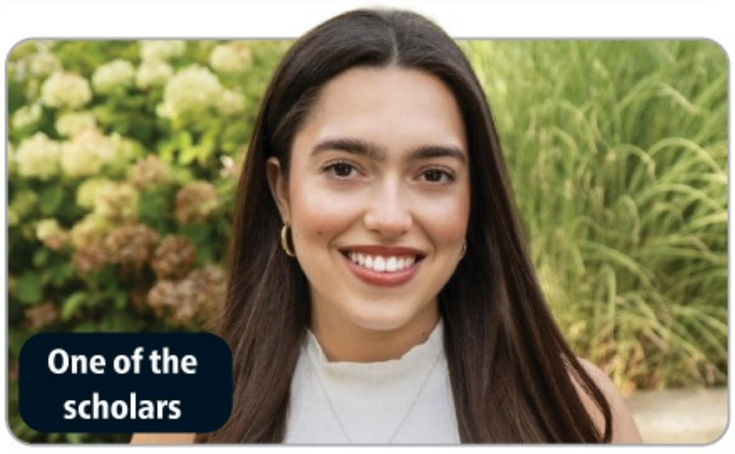
On December 7, 1787, Delaware became the first state to ratify the Constitution (highest law in the US). This made Delaware the first state to join the Union. After Delaware's approval, the other 12 original colonies began to ratify the Constitution and enter the Union. In May 1790, Rhode Island was the last colony to agree to the Constitution and become a US state.



Delaware's state seal

Novel in verse wins award

Kareem Between by Shifa Saltagi Safadi received the 2024 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, a prestigious honor in book publishing. The middle-grade novel is written in verse and tells the coming-of-age story of a seventh-grade Syrian American boy who is trying to balance school and family. When accepting the award, Safadi—a middle school teacher who immigrated to the US from Syria as a child—thanked her parents as well as Muslim authors who came before her.


One of the scholars

Rhodes Scholars announced

A total of 32 US students have been selected to complete graduate degrees at the University of Oxford in the UK as part of the Rhodes Scholarship program. Established in 1902, the program identifies young leaders worldwide. Nearly 3,000 US students applied this year. Harvard University in Massachusetts had the most recipients of any college, with six, including Sofia L. Corona (shown above).

Three of the stamps

New stamps for 2025 revealed

The US Postal Service released a first look at dozens of new stamps for 2025. Among them is a stamp of TV icon Betty White (1922–2021), whose depiction will be based on a 2010 photograph by Kwaku Alston. The Lunar New Year series will continue with a stamp for the Year of the Snake. And the latest Love stamp will feature artist Keith Haring's famous drawing of two people with a red heart.

A Nubian giraffe in Uganda

WOW! Giraffes are the tallest land animals in the world, with males standing up to 19 feet tall and weighing more than 4,000 pounds.

US proposes protection for giraffes

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has moved to add giraffes to its list of endangered species. About 117,000 giraffes remain in the wild worldwide after sharp population declines due to habitat loss and poaching (illegal hunting). If the proposal is finalized next year, it will mark the first time giraffes will receive protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Congress (the branch of government that makes laws) passed the ESA in 1973 to protect animals and plants at risk of extinction. Listing a species as endangered provides legal protections, such as limits on hunting and trade, which can help a species thrive again. For example, the bald eagle population rebounded from the brink of extinction after being on the list from 1978 to 2007.

Giraffes are being considered for the list because their populations have dropped by more than 40% since the 1980s. The growth of cities and farms in their native Africa has reduced the size of their natural habitats, and the changing climate has made it more difficult for them to access food and water. Giraffes are also hunted for meat and body parts, which are used to make products such as rugs, shoes, and jewelry. Thousands of these goods have been sold in the US in the past 20 years.

Under the proposal, the US would list Kordofan, Nubian, and West African giraffes as endangered. These giraffes live mostly in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Uganda, and their populations have declined by 77% since 1985. A total of about 6,000 remain.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service manages the list of endangered species.

Being on the endangered list would help giraffes in Africa because the sale of giraffe products would be restricted in the US, which would decrease poaching. It would also increase funding for conservation efforts.

"This action supports giraffe conservation while ensuring the United States does not contribute further to their decline," said Martha Williams, director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Koala found relaxing in South Australia couple's bedroom" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (2); USFWS; COURTESY THE PUBLISHER; RHODES TRUST; USPS; ON LEFT PAGE; CNF; GETTY IMAGES (3)

Around the world

Vulcan

Dampierre-en-Yvelines, France
World's largest fossil sold

On November 16, a long-necked apatosaurus skeleton, nicknamed Vulcan, became the largest dinosaur fossil ever sold at auction. The nearly complete skeleton contains 300 bones and measures about 70 feet—longer than two school buses. The bones were found in Wyoming and are about 150 million years old. Vulcan's new owner, who paid $6.4 million, has said it will go on public display and can be used for scientific research.

Rosario Murillo and Daniel Ortega

Managua, Nicaragua
Changes to constitution

President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, could gain more control over Nicaragua after national lawmakers approved changes to the constitution (principles for government). If confirmed that next year, the changes will make Murillo co-president and extend the president's term from five to six years. The power the couple holds over the media will also increase.

The black penguin

South Georgia Island
Rare all-black penguin found

A rare king penguin with black feathers all over its body has been spotted on South Georgia Island in the Atlantic Ocean. Photographer Yves Adams was leading an expedition when a friend saw the unusual bird. The penguin's color is caused by a condition called melanism. The body produces extra melanin, which creates color in skin, hair, and feathers.

United Kingdom
Storm recovery work begins

Cleanup has begun after Storm Bert brought heavy rain, snow, and wind to the UK and Ireland over the weekend of November 23. The storm caused flooding, power outages, closed roads, and canceled flights and train travel. At least five people died. Boats and rafts were used for rescues, and shelters were set up to offer food and warmth.

Snow affected roads.

Madrid, Spain
Art made of wood

On November 19, the Prado Museum in Madrid opened an exhibition celebrating nearly 100 polychrome sculptures—multicolored painted statues and models from history, most of which were made from wood. The exhibition is designed to draw attention to the colorful painted works that in the past were often overlooked in favor of marble and bronze sculptures. It will be on display until March 25, 2025.

A polychrome

ALAMY (3); GETTY IMAGES (4); LUDO STUDIO; YVES ADAMS COMPASS MEDIA; PRIMEROS PASOS

Around the world

Hong Kong
Activists sentenced to prison

A group of 45 politicians and activists have been sentenced to up to 10 years in prison for plotting to "overthrow" Hong Kong's government. The group disagreed with China's increased involvement in their government. They were arrested in 2021, when they held an unofficial local election to select candidates to run against current lawmakers.

Sejong-si, South Korea
K-pop stars' labor claim is dismissed

The Ministry of Employment and Labor has dismissed claims of workplace bullying by K-pop band NewJeans, saying the pop stars are not classified as workers. One of the band members, Hanni, said she was treated unfairly and purposely ignored by the company that manages NewJeans. But the labor office said Hanni is considered an artist, not an employee, so her case was dismissed. Many people criticized the decision.

Rome, Italy
New rules for e-scooters

On November 20, Italy's government approved a law that is designed to improve safety for electric scooter riders. The law was introduced because of a rise in e-scooter accidents. Riders will now have to wear helmets and carry insurance coverage, which would pay for damages if they crash. The scooters will also be banned from bike lanes and pedestrian areas. "No more wild scooters," said transport minister Matteo Salvini.

Wellington, New Zealand
Thousands protest for Māori rights

About 42,000 people gathered outside New Zealand's parliament (similar to Congress) on November 19 to protest a bill that would change the country's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi. Opponents say that if passed, the law would take rights away from the Māori, the first people to inhabit New Zealand. The rally followed a nine-day march called a *hīkoi*.

Brisbane, Australia
Bluey's World opens

An interactive experience based on the TV show *Bluey* has opened in Australia. At Bluey's World, visitors can explore a full-size version of the house where Bluey, Bingo, Bandit, and Chilli live. There are games from the TV show, such as Keepy Uppy and Magic Xylophone, and a themed playground. The food, like pizza from "Pizza Girls," is also inspired by episodes of *Bluey*.

Should more cities reduce speed limits?

Lower speeds keep people safe, but many feel there are better solutions.

What you need to know

- Speed limits on local roads are set by state, city, and town governments.
- As of 2022, more than 91% of American households owned at least one car, and in 2021 the nation had about 233 million licensed drivers.
- In 2022, there were 5.93 million car accidents reported to the police in the US, and 42,514 people died as a result. In 2023, 40,990 people died in car accidents.
- Speeding is considered a factor in about 29% of traffic deaths.

TAKE IT SLOW
In 1652, in the New Amsterdam colony that became New York City, it was illegal to drive a horse-drawn vehicle at a gallop.

Studies have shown that lower speed limits reduce the number of vehicle accidents and the number of injuries and deaths they cause. That's because the slower a person is driving, the more time they have to react and the faster they can slow down their car. Safety experts say that the ideal speed for vehicles on smaller city streets is 20 miles per hour, and on bigger streets it's 25 miles per hour. Major US cities such as Seattle, Minneapolis, and New York City have all reduced speed limits, and many others want to do the same. But opponents of those plans say there are better solutions to keep people safe. What do you think? Should more cities reduce speed limits?

Yes—safety comes first

Slowing down just a little saves lives. A car going 10 miles per hour can come to a safe stop within 27 feet, but a car moving at 25 miles per hour needs 85 feet of stopping distance. That's a big difference! And roads are not just for cars. They're also for pedestrians, cyclists, kids, older people, wheelchair users, and more. Lowering speed limits makes cities more walkable, which means fewer people will rely on cars—and that helps the planet. Driving at lower speeds also reduces air and noise pollution on roads. Studies have shown that speeds between 12 and 18 miles per hour in urban areas produce the lowest emissions.

No—it's not the only way

Cities already have different speed limits for different kinds of roads. Limits are higher for highways, lower for heavy pedestrian areas, and lowest for school zones. There's no need to bring them down further. Instead, cities can use tools that are proven to reduce speeding. For example, speed cameras catch people going too fast, and speed bumps and rotaries force drivers to slow down. Lowering speed limits can cause other problems, like traffic jams and congested roads. That's unfair to people who drive for work. Truck drivers and delivery people would have a hard time getting where they need to go on time.

YES Three reasons more cities should reduce speed limits

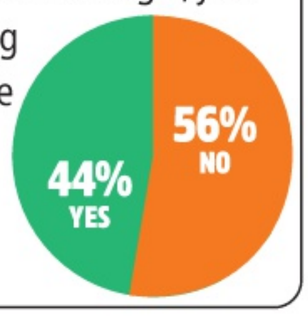
1. Even a slight decrease in speed can reduce a car's stopping time.
2. Lower speed limits make streets safer, which will make people more likely to walk or bike and leave their cars at home.
3. Lower speed limits are more climate-friendly. Cars produce fewer emissions and less noise when they slow down.

NO Three reasons more cities should not reduce speed limits

1. Cities already have lower speed limits for school and pedestrian zones. There's no need to lower them further.
2. There are many other creative ways to slow down cars and make streets safer.
3. Reducing speed limits can cause other problems, which isn't fair to people who have to drive for their jobs.

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if adults should be phone-free outside schools. By a small margin, you favored letting grown-ups use their phones while they wait for kids.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think more cities should reduce speed limits or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

SHUTTERSTOCK

An inspiration off the court

Basketball star Chiney Ogwumike is empowering young women in Africa.

Chiney Ogwumike, 32, is a pioneering sports broadcaster and a former professional basketball player who works to ensure that women have opportunities in the world of sports. Recently, she launched Queens of the Continent, a foundation that focuses on empowering young women and girls across Africa. The organization's work has included giving local schools new gym floors and providing mental health support in communities.

Playing in the WNBA

Ogwumike, the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, grew up in Texas. She fell in love with basketball at a young age and told NBC it became "a vehicle for me to find my best self and really become super confident in who I was." She was a star player at Stanford University and in 2014 became the number one overall pick in the WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) draft. She played for the Connecticut Sun and later the Los Angeles Sparks, from 2021 to 2023.

In 2018, Ogwumike began contributing to ESPN's WNBA coverage, becoming the first full-time professional athlete to work as an analyst while still playing. She left the league in 2023 and took on a full-time role as an on-air sports analyst for shows such as *WNBA Countdown* and *NBA Countdown*.

In 2022, President Joe Biden appointed her to a council to strengthen ties between the US, Africa, and people of African descent. That experience, along with her work with NBA Africa, motivated her to launch her foundation. As someone of African descent, she said she could "inspire those on the ground just by returning home."

Chiney Ogwumike

FUN FACT
Chiney Ogwumike and her sister Nneka played basketball together for Stanford University and the Los Angeles Sparks.

A passion for birds

Samuel Henderson, a 10-year-old in Oklahoma, has gained attention for his bird call imitations after a video of his school talent show act went viral. Henderson, who has autism, learned to mimic calls by listening to birds and using birdwatching apps. He has mastered more than 50 species, including owls and wild turkeys. The video was noticed by bird experts and led to an invitation to visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, a research institution focused on birds. "I've always wanted to share my bird calls with the world," he said.

Samuel Henderson

Ryan Wang

Teen wins top prize

Ryan Wang, age 17, has been named the 2024 BBC Young Musician of the Year. The honor is awarded every two years to a musician under age 18 who lives or studies in the UK. Wang, who is from Vancouver, Canada, is currently attending school in England on a music scholarship. He began playing the piano at age 4 and gave his first solo recital at age 5 at the world-renowned Carnegie Hall in New York City. In the BBC competition, finalists performed with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, with Wang playing Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2*.

OVERHEARD

"The truth is, we can all make change."
Billie Eilish, Apple Music's 2024 Artist of the Year, on making a positive difference in the world

GETTY IMAGES (3); LORI HENDERSON; BBC/BETSAN EVANS

Scientists studied dolphins' facial expressions.

Why do animals play?

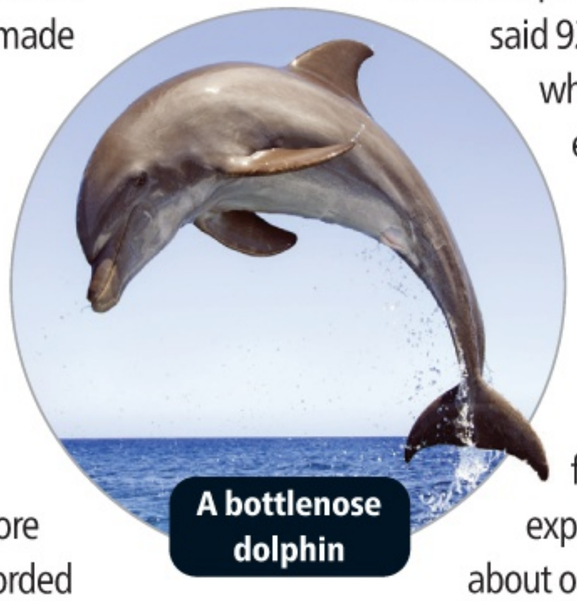
Scientists aren't sure why young animals play, but one theory is that they are preparing to be adults. For example, chimpanzees have been seen playing with stick "dolls," possibly practicing parenting skills. Bear cubs wrestle each other and pounce, which could help them develop hunting skills and strengthen social bonds.

Bear cubs

Dolphins "smile" while playing

New research has found that bottlenose dolphins playing in groups "smile" at each other. A team of scientists noticed that dolphins living in captivity often made facial expressions in which they opened their mouths, which looked like smiling or laughing. This usually happened when they were playing together.

Bottlenose dolphins are very sociable and like to play together in groups, called pods. The scientists wanted to learn more about their behavior, so they recorded videos of 22 bottlenose dolphins at two wildlife parks. The dolphins were recorded while playing in pairs, with their human trainers, and on their own.


A bottlenose dolphin

During the 80 hours of video footage, the scientists counted 1,288 times when the dolphins used the open-mouth expression. The team said 92% of those instances happened when dolphins were playing with each other. They rarely used the expression when they were playing on their own or with humans. Nearly 90% of the expressions happened when a dolphin could see its playmate's face. If the other dolphin saw the expression, they "smiled" back about one third of the time.

Past research has found that dogs, horses, and primates (a group that includes monkeys and apes) use an open-mouth expression when they're playing. However, this is the first study to suggest that marine mammals do it too.

Biologist Elisabetta Palagi said that the relaxed open mouth "is a universal sign of playfulness, helping animals—and us—signal fun and avoid conflict." She explained, "It's a signal that communicates 'Look, I'm just playing!'—like when we put a smiley face on a cell phone message that could be misleading."

The research focused on dolphins in captivity, so those living in the wild could behave differently when playing. It's possible that while playing in spaces that are more open, dolphins might prefer to communicate using sounds instead of facial expressions. Researchers also want to find out if the "smile" changes the way the animals play or leads them to play together for a longer time.

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Australia

This park is named for two of Australia's most famous landmarks, the Uluru sandstone monolith (rock structure) and the red domes of Kata Tjuta. For thousands of years, the area in the central Australian desert has been the home of the Anangu people, who co-manage the park today. Along with stunning landscape views, the park offers a cultural center, hiking trails, stargazing, and varied wildlife, including red kangaroos, wallabies, thorny devil and blue-tongue lizards, and splendid fairy-wrens. Self-guided bike tours and ranger-guided walking tours are also available.

A red kangaroo

SWEET SNOOZERS
Young puppies typically spend 18 to 20 hours a day sleeping.

Cats and dogs can get along.

The secret to cat and dog friendship

Cats and dogs are often shown as enemies in TV shows or films, but in real life they can actually get along well. New research suggests that the way the animals are introduced shapes how friendly they will be.

A study by the Dogs Trust, a canine welfare organization, found that puppies are calmer and friendlier if they are introduced to cats gradually, over more than one day. It found that puppies tend to behave better during these first meetings if they are very young—under 12 weeks old.

Rachel Casey, who works for the Dogs Trust, says puppies and cats should meet in a calm environment "where everybody is sitting down [and] it's really quiet." Owners should hold the puppy on a leash and keep it happily distracted until it starts to get comfortable with the cat. Ideally, cats should have an escape route, such as a safe spot high above the floor where they can go if they feel threatened.

This study is part of a project tracking the lives of dogs to learn more about them. More than 9,500 dogs have enrolled.

Animal of the week: Tokay gecko

Scientists have found that tokay geckos, one of the largest gecko species, have a "sixth sense." They use a part of their inner ear called the saccule to detect deep, low vibrations coming from underground or underwater.

- **LIFE SPAN:** 10 years in the wild, 20 in captivity
- **HABITAT:** Tropical rainforests in Asia
- **SIZE:** About 8 to 16 inches
- **DIET:** Insects, small birds, mice, rats, snakes
- **FUN FACT:** You can see straight through a tokay gecko's head if you look in its ear hole.

Good week / Bad week

African penguins

After more than 10 years of research and testing, scientists have shown that some types of artificial nests can provide a boost to endangered African penguins. A new study found that the fake nests improved their breeding by about 16.5%.

Ash trees

The emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that damages ash trees, has now been found in every county in Iowa. Ash trees once numbered more than 50 million in the state but have declined significantly since the insect's arrival.

GETTY IMAGES (3); ALAMY (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (5)

Ask an expert

"Do skunks smell their own odor when they spray?"

Eva, 9, Oregon

Eli Strull
Curator of education and guest experience, WNC Nature Center

Skunks have a keen sense of smell, which they use to find food, but I am not sure if they are sensitive to the smell of their own spray. The spray works by temporarily blinding another animal so the skunk can get away. (It's kind of like an invisibility cloak—I want that superpower!)

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the WNC Nature Center at wildwnc.org.

A famous tree shines

The Rockefeller Center Christmas tree is an iconic holiday sight.

Each year in December and January, about 750,000 people visit a dazzling tree in the heart of midtown Manhattan.

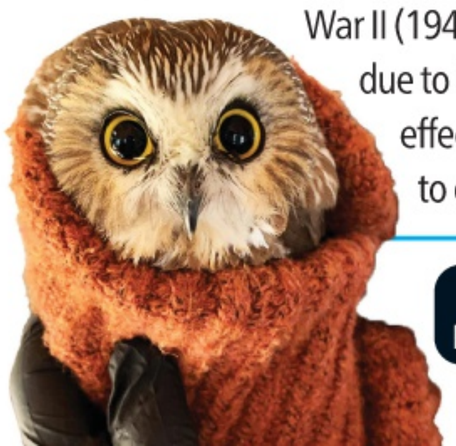
About the tree

During the holiday season, elaborate decorations adorn Rockefeller Center, a complex of buildings in the center of New York City. The tree—usually a Norway Spruce—is the highlight. In past years, trees have come from 11 states and one Canadian province (Ontario). This year's tree is from Massachusetts—the first tree from that state since 1959—and is 74 feet tall. The tree is lit in a special ceremony and stays up until mid-January. After the tree is taken down, its wood is used to help build a home through Habitat for Humanity.

The early years

The first tree was put up in 1931 by Rockefeller Center workers who were thankful to have jobs during the Great Depression (a period of widespread poverty and unemployment in the US). They pooled their money to buy a 20-foot Balsam fir and decorated it with handmade garlands and ornaments made from tin cans. In 1933, the first Rockefeller Center tree-lighting ceremony was held. The now-famous skating rink at the base of the tree opened on Christmas Day in 1936. During World War II (1941–45), the tree stayed dark due to blackout restrictions put into effect to make the city less visible to enemy aircraft and boats.

GETTY IMAGES (7); ASSOCIATED PRESS (2); RAVENSBEARD WILDLIFE CENTER



An owl was found living in the tree in 2020. She was named Rocky—short for Rockefeller Center—and returned to the wild.

SUPER STAR
The tree is topped with a three-dimensional star that is covered in millions of crystals and weighs more than 900 pounds.
LOTS OF LIGHTS
About five miles of wire with more than 50,000 lights are strung on the Rockefeller Center tree.

A dozen angel sculptures greet visitors to the tree.

Tree traditions

Washington, DC

The President and First Lady traditionally light the National Christmas Tree (right) every year on the Ellipse, near the White House, in Washington, DC.

The White House

In 1912, President Howard Taft's children began the tradition of erecting a Christmas tree in the White House's Blue Room (right). Today, tree growers enter a contest to have one of theirs chosen.

brightly in New York

DID YOU KNOW?
The biggest Rockefeller Center tree erected so far went up in 1999 and was 100 feet tall.

Workers prepare a tree for transport.

How the tree is chosen

The head gardener at Rockefeller Center, Erik Pauze, has been responsible for choosing the tree for more than 30 years. The selected tree needs to be one that instantly puts "a huge smile" on kids' faces, Pauze said. He drives around looking for trees himself, but people can also submit their own trees for consideration. After the year's tree is chosen and before it is moved, Pauze regularly visits it to water and feed it. To get the tree to New York City, workers tie the branches together, cut it down, and lower it onto a flatbed truck for transport.

The Rockettes

The lighting ceremony

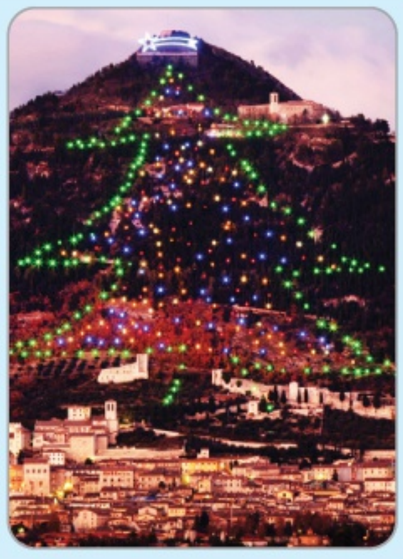
The Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting is typically held on the Wednesday after Thanksgiving. It is a major televised event, with large crowds gathered in the streets surrounding the tree and many more watching from homes throughout the country. Highlights include celebrity guests, musical artists, and a dance performance by the world-famous Rockettes. As the ceremony nears its conclusion, the mayor of New York City officially lights the tree. This year's ceremony will take place on December 4 and will be broadcast on NBC. After the ceremony, the tree will be lit every day during the holiday season.

The Vatican

The global headquarters of the Catholic Church, located in Rome, Italy, puts up a Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square (right). After the 2023 tree was taken down, its wood was used to make toys.

Mount Ingino, Italy

Every year the town of Gubbio, Italy, sets up a display of hundreds of lights arranged to look like a Christmas tree on the slopes of nearby Mount Ingino (right). The display stretches more than 2,000 feet tall.



WOW!
The largest organism on Earth is a fungus in Oregon that covers nearly four square miles and is known as the Humongous Fungus.
Mushrooms have caps aboveground and mycelium underground, like roots.

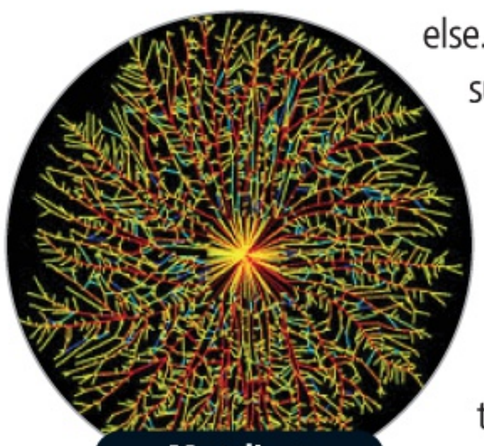
Can fungi think and make decisions?

Fungi may possess their own intelligence, including the ability to remember, make decisions, and recognize basic shapes, according to a new study. Fungi are a group of plant-like living things that includes mold, mildew, and mushrooms. The study could lead to a deeper understanding of different forms of intelligence.

A team of researchers at Tohoku University and Nagaoka College in Japan set out to learn more about fungi by studying their mycelium, which is a system of thin strands that grow underground and function like roots. For the study, the team worked with a type of fungus called Phanerochaete velutina, which feeds on wood.

They laid out wood blocks that would serve as food for the fungus. They arranged the blocks in two different formations—a circle and a cross—to see if that affected how the mycelium would grow. The blocks had empty spaces between them.

Normally, fungal mycelium grow outward in all directions from a center point. In this study, the mycelium started out that way, growing outward from each block. But eventually they changed direction based on the block configurations.


Mycelium growing outward

In the circle of blocks, the mycelium started growing evenly around each individual block but eventually stopped growing inside the circle. Instead, it grew on the outside of the circle. The researchers think the mycelium did this because it knew there was no benefit to growing inward.

With the cross formation, more mycelia grew on the four outermost blocks than anywhere else. Although the team isn't exactly sure why, they think this happened because the mycelium used those blocks as a good starting point to search for food.

The team said that in both cases, the fungi were identifying the spots with the most nutrients, processing that information, and changing their behavior in order to grow toward those areas. To do this, the strands of mycelium were communicating across their network, sharing what they had learned.

The researchers compared the system to the way the human brain uses a network of nerve connections to send messages. "You'd be surprised at just how much fungi are capable of," said Yu Fukasawa, lead author of the study. "Quite frankly, the differences in how they solve problems compared to humans is mind-blowing."

Helping fungi survive

Should fungi stand alone?

Two nations are leading a global push to give fungi better environmental protection by classifying them separately from plants and animals. The UK and Chile submitted a proposal at an international conference on preserving and protecting biodiversity (variety of living things) that was held in Colombia from October 21 to November 1.

The proposal calls for fungi to be classified as an "independent kingdom of life" and said laws should be established to protect fungi's benefits to ecosystems and people. Advocates pointed out that fungi represent 16 times more of Earth's biodiversity than plants. There is growing evidence that fungi play an important role in maintaining a healthy environment.

ALAMY; MARK D. FRICKER, LUKE L. M. HEATON, NICK S. JONES, LYNNE BODDY; GETTY IMAGES

New insight on the invention of the wheel

The invention of the wheel is one of the biggest breakthroughs in human history, yet it is not known exactly where, when, or how it happened. A new study found evidence that copper miners in the Carpathian Mountains in Europe may have played a big part in developing the wheel, starting in about 4000 BCE.

Before the wheel as we know it was invented, people transported heavy objects, like mining carts, by setting them on top of rollers. But workers had to move the rollers from the back of the object to the front, which was slow and would have been hard in a narrow mine shaft.

ANCIENT ARTIFACT
The oldest wheel ever found was not for a vehicle—it's a pottery wheel that dates back about 5,500 years.

The new study concluded that over the course of about 500 years, the miners improved this simple roller system to suit their needs. The researchers determined that first, the miners developed grooved rollers. The cart sat in the grooves and the rollers rotated underneath it, without needing to be picked up and moved.

Next, the miners created a wheelset, with wheels fixed to an axle (rod or shaft that rotates the wheels of a vehicle). This raised the cart higher off the ground. Finally, the miners developed an axle with wheels that turned separately from it. This is the same concept used in car axles today.

Despite the findings, the study's authors know that debates about the wheel are likely to keep rolling along. "It's still possible that multiple civilizations independently discovered the wheel on their own," said one of the authors.

The oldest known wooden wheel and axle were found in Slovenia and are about 5,200 years old.

The XB-1 in flight

Supersonic jet hits high speed

A jet designed to move faster than the speed of sound set a record with its latest flight. The jet, called XB-1, hit 629 miles per hour. This is a major step toward supersonic speed, which is at least 761 miles per hour.

The XB-1 was built by American aviation company Boom Supersonic as a test vehicle for its broader supersonic program. Boom plans to use XB-1's technology to build a supersonic passenger jet it hopes to launch in 2029. Called Overture, it will carry up to 80 passengers and fly twice the speed of current jets.

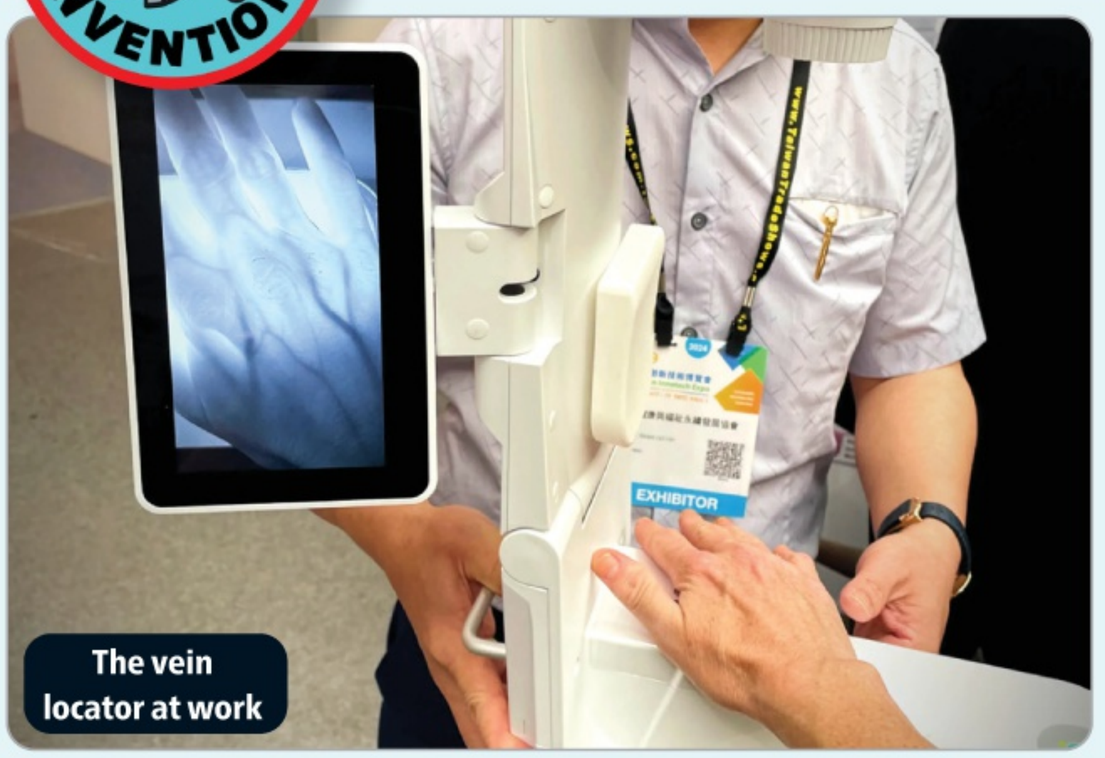
Overture would be the first supersonic passenger jet since the Concorde, which operated from 1976 to 2003. It traveled up to 1,354 miles per hour but was expensive and used enormous amounts of fuel. Boom said its aircraft will be better for the environment than Concorde was.

Boom will continue testing the XB-1. Several major airlines have already ordered Overture jets.

PETAR MILOŠEVIĆ; BOOM SUPERSONIC; BRONWYN THOMPSON/NEW ATLAS

AMAZING INVENTION

Device that sees veins through skin



The vein locator at work

Medical professionals often need access to a patient's veins, whether it's to draw blood for a routine procedure or to insert an IV in an emergency. Some patients have veins that are hard to see or access. A new device makes skin transparent and veins easy to find.

Patients place their hand on the Adison Vein Locator. A high-resolution 3D image of their veins and arteries appears on a screen, guiding medical professionals to the right spot. The device works for people with any skin color and makes needle sticks up to 30% more accurate.

Photos of the week

Rising high
A hot-air balloon takes flight during a Diwali festival in India.

Blue hue
A western swamphen makes a striking sight in Turkey.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

All aglow
An ancient cathedral in the UK is illuminated for an interactive exhibition.

Fall foliage
Rows of vibrant maple trees line the Great Wall of China.

Cultural tradition
A woman wears a regional costume to celebrate the Day of the Dead in Mexico.

Intricate art
An exhibit in the UK includes items from the 16th and 17th centuries.

LOCAL LEGENDS
The Orlando Pride are the first professional sports team from Orlando, Florida, to win a major title.

The Orlando Pride

Player joins US team

Lily Yohannes (shown above), a 17-year-old soccer star who was born in the US and moved to the Netherlands at age 10, will play for the US in international competitions. In the past, she trained with both the Dutch and US national teams. She usually plays for the Dutch club Ajax.

Orlando Pride are NWSL champs

The NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) has a new champion. In the postseason final on November 23, the Orlando Pride, the league's top team, beat the number two team, the Washington Spirit, 1–0, and earned their first-ever title. The match was played at CPKC Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri, home of the NWSL's KC Current. It opened earlier this year and is the first venue ever built specifically for a women's professional sports team.

Barbra Banda

The Pride had an incredible season. They won this year's NWSL Shield, the award for the team with the most regular-season points. Teams earn points for wins and ties, and they finished with 60, a new NWSL record. They are the second team in the league's history to finish a season with the Shield and the championship. The Pride's other accomplishments included a record-setting 24-game unbeaten streak—which includes one match from last season—plus records for the longest winning streak (eight games) and the most regular-season wins (18). The Spirit also had 18 wins this season.

In the semifinals, the Spirit beat the reigning NWSL champions, NJ/NY Gotham FC, in a penalty shootout, while the Pride defeated the Current, 3–2. Pride forward Marta (she uses one name), who is from Brazil and one of the greatest soccer players of all time, scored the winning goal. Although she has competed in six Olympics and six World Cups, she said the NWSL final was the biggest match of her career.

The key moment in the final came 35 minutes into the action, when Orlando's Barbra Banda received a pass from teammate Angelina (she uses one name). Banda then streaked up the right sideline, maneuvered past a Spirit defender, and fired a shot toward the goal that found its way into the back of the net. Although the Spirit had the ball for 57.6% of the game, attempted 26 shots, and forced Pride goalkeeper Anna Moorhouse to make five saves, Orlando held on for the win.

Banda scored four goals in the playoffs, a new league record. She is also the first player to score in all three rounds of the postseason. She was named the championship's Most Valuable Player.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

On November 23, second-ranked Ohio State University beat the previously undefeated fifth-ranked Indiana University, 38–15. Meanwhile, in one of four games that day where Top 25 teams were defeated in upsets, the unranked University of Oklahoma beat the seventh-ranked University of Alabama, 24–3. One star was Oklahoma's Xavier Robinson, who ran for 107 yards and two touchdowns.

Oklahoma's Xavier Robinson (left)

WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

UCLA snapped the University of South Carolina's 43-game winning streak with a 77–62 win on November 24. UCLA had been ranked fifth, but the win took them to number one and pushed South Carolina from the top spot to fourth.

FORMULA 1 RACING

At the Las Vegas Grand Prix on November 23, Red Bull driver Max Verstappen finished in fifth place, but it gave him enough points to clinch his fourth F1 world championship title.

EARLY YEARS
Coach Geno Auriemma was born in Montella, Italy, and moved to the US at age 7.

Geno Auriemma and Chris Dailey (in red) on November 20

UConn coach breaks major record

History was made in college basketball on November 20. That night, the University of Connecticut (UConn) women's basketball team defeated Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU), 85–41, earning UConn head coach Geno Auriemma the 1,217th victory of his career. He now has more wins than any other women's or men's college basketball coach in history.

Going into the game, Auriemma was tied for wins with retired Stanford University women's coach Tara VanDerveer. Several of Auriemma's former players were in attendance for his big moment, including current WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) star Diana Taurasi and retired players Sue Bird and Maya Moore.

Auriemma has been UConn's head coach since the 1985–86 season. He has led teams to 30 conference championships, 23 NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) tournament Final Fours, and 11 national championships. From 2013 to 2016, UConn won four national titles in a row, something no other women's program has done. Through November 25, Auriemma had coached 1,380 UConn games and lost only 162 times.

One person who has played a large role in Auriemma's success is his top assistant, Chris Dailey, who was hired in 1985. After the FDU win, Auriemma said, "No amount of championships and no amount of numbers or awards can take the place of the lives we've impacted."

UConn went undefeated in their first five games this season and are ranked second in the country. They are led by Paige Bueckers, who will likely be the top pick in the 2025 WNBA Draft.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Trevor Deng**

Team: **West Portal Lutheran 7B Volleyball**

"Coach Trevor is a very motivational coach. Every game, he always helps us on the sidelines and we become better players! We recently lost our semi-final game, and although all of us were sad, he said we did a great job and we all improved. He gave us many great tips to help us with our skills. He always says, 'Stay low, you got this!' and 'Shooting star!' He is the best coach ever." Audrey, 12, California

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Jasmine Drolet

AGE: 22 SPORT: CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING
TEAMS: DARTMOUTH UNIVERSITY/TEAM CANADA

Cool start I grew up in an alpine ski town in Canada. When I got to elementary school, we had cross-country ski lessons there. I used to figure skate, but I stopped around age 12 and switched to skiing. My brother was involved with racing and he really liked it. In 2019, I qualified for my first Junior World Ski Championships. It was awesome to get to race for Canada at a high level against people who are the best in their country.

Happy place Skiing is a nice way to be outside, connect with nature, and be active. I love going for a long ski when it's not too cold but there's fresh snow. I can be by myself listening to music or with a group of people.

Keeping fit In the winter, we train one to three hours every day on snow. We also train throughout the year. One thing we do is roller skiing (using skis that have wheels on them). You wear your ski boots, hold your poles, and ski on the road.

Special feeling Being a little nervous is helpful to me in a race. It gives me a bit of adrenaline and a little push.

Major moments Winning an individual NCAA championship last season is one of my biggest accomplishments. Also, earlier this year I was at the U23 World Ski Championships as part of the Canadian relay team and we won gold. It was amazing to be a part of it. I would really like to go to the Winter Olympics in 2026. I'll keep training hard and see where it takes me.

Good advice It's never too late to start a sport if you really want to try to get into it.

GETTY IMAGES; DARTMOUTH ATHLETICS (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Jentry Chau vs. The Underworld

Series about a teen with powers

***Jentry Chau vs. The Underworld* is about a Chinese American girl who juggles high school life with battling monsters.**

A new animated action-comedy series that combines supernatural forces, high school life, light horror, and romance is coming to Netflix. *Jentry Chau vs. The Underworld* begins when Chinese American teen Jentry, who is about to turn 16, learns that a demon king is out to get her. She ends up having to battle monsters with help from her great-aunt Gugu and a *jiangshi* (a hopping vampire from Chinese folklore). The show premieres on Netflix on December 5.

Echo Wu

Jentry is an unusual hero because she would rather lead a regular life than have to fight demons. She can shoot fire from her hands, but she has been suppressing the ability for years. Gugu, a weapons expert and demon hunter, wants Jentry to follow in her footsteps in the family, and some kids at school also think she should embrace her powers, but others are afraid of them. Echo Wu, the show's creator, told *The Week Junior* that, in a way, Jentry's story is about "growing up and trying to figure out your place in the world."

Viewers who know Chinese mythology will be able to spot familiar elements in the show, including a staff belonging to the Monkey King. There is also a third eye motif that appears often in the series and represents Jentry's power to perceive things others can't.

Wu grew up in Texas, which is where Jentry lives, and she based the character's personality on herself. She said Jentry's style, taste in music (a series soundtrack will be released), and teen experiences feel "very genuine." Wu's biggest hope, she said, is that viewers appreciate that the series is unlike other shows. "I'm also hoping Jentry is a character everyone loves," Wu said.

More animated teen heroes

Teen Titans Go!

There have been 400 episodes of this comedy, which is the longest-running animated series in DC Comics history. It follows young Robin, Starfire, Raven, Beast Boy, and Cyborg living as roommates.

Kim Possible

This show was a big hit when it originally aired from 2002 to 2007. It centers on Kim, a high school student and cheerleader who fights villains around the world. She's helped by her best friend, Ron Stoppable, his mole rat, Rufus, and webmaster Wade.

Young Justice

Episodes of this series are packed with action and emotion. It stars teen superhero sidekicks that include Superboy, Kid Flash, and Miss Martian. They form the Team to support the Justice League and battle supervillains.

Unstoppable

DID YOU KNOW?
Wrestling was featured in the original Olympic Games in 708 BCE.

An inspiring sports movie

The new film *Unstoppable* tells the inspiring story of wrestler Anthony Robles. He was born with one leg but competed against athletes with two legs and became a champion. The drama, which is based on Robles' 2012 memoir, *Unstoppable: From Underdog to Undefeated*, premieres in theaters on December 6. It is rated PG-13.

Robles, who grew up in Mesa, Arizona, began wrestling at age 14. He wasn't good at first, but he stuck with it and won two state championships and one national title by the time he left high school. He told *The Week Junior* he credits his mother with much of his success. "She taught me I could do anything I set my mind to—I just had to figure it out," he said. Many college coaches doubted Robles could compete at a high level. He joined the Arizona State University wrestling team as a walk-on (non-recruited athlete) and won an NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Championship title when he was a senior.

Anthony Robles

Robles was a producer on the film and made sure it stayed true to his life. Some of his family members even make brief appearances on-screen.

Robles also served as the wrestling double for actor Jharrel Jerome, who portrays him in the film. They trained together five days a week so the actor could learn Robles' style.

Robles would like audiences to come away from the film realizing how important it is to treat people with physical challenges with respect. He also wants everyone to know they can be unstoppable, too. "Focus on your abilities, and treat a challenge like a puzzle," he said. "You might have to move pieces around in a different way than everybody else sometimes, but you can still do it."

READER RECOMMENDS

Sam & Cat *(Netflix or rent on major platforms)*

"This series is a spin-off of two Nickelodeon sitcoms. It centers on *iCarly*'s rebellious Sam Puckett (played by Jennette McCurdy) and *Victorious*' bubbly Cat Valentine (Ariana Grande), who become best friends and start a babysitting business. They have wacky adventures, and their personalities sometimes clash. The show also has other quirky characters, such as their friends Dice and Goomer. My favorite episode is when Goomer discovers he is not good at mixed martial arts and enlists Dice to help him. I recommend this sitcom to anyone who loves friendships and comedy." Nikita, 12, California

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Is It Cake? Holiday
(Netflix)

The popular competition series is back with a four-episode special. Nine bakers from past seasons will craft holiday-themed cakes that look like ice skates, wreaths, nutcrackers, and other winter items. As always, judges try to guess what is real and what is made of cake.

The Invincible Fight Girl
(Max)

This new series follows Andy, a determined young girl who dreams of becoming a great wrestler. Her parents want her to become an accountant, but instead she sets off to train with expert wrestling instructors and adopts the nickname "Fight Girl" along the way.

The Simpsons Funday Football
(Disney+) (ESPN+) (NFL+)
December 9 at 8 p.m. ET

Save the date for this live event. With the help of technology that tracks football players on the field, a game between the Cincinnati Bengals and the Dallas Cowboys will be animated and feature characters from *The Simpsons*.

AMAZON CONTENT SERVICES LLC; GETTY IMAGES; NICKELODEON; COURTESY OF NETFLIX; WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY; DISNEY; ON LEFT PAGE: COURTESY OF NETFLIX; GETTY IMAGES; DC ENTERTAINMENT (2); DISNEY

WOW!
Lego produces more than 300 million tires for its toy kits each year.

Lego Horizon Adventures

Lego version of popular game

Lego Horizon Adventures is a new action adventure game. It was recently released for the PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, and PC.

The game is based on the popular role-playing game Horizon Zero Dawn, which came out in 2017. It was set in a post-apocalyptic future and starred a skilled archer and warrior named Aloy, an outcast with a mysterious background. Horizon Zero Dawn was followed by a sequel and a spin-off, and all the games in the series are rated T for Teen.

Lego Horizon Adventures adapts Horizon Zero Dawn for players of all ages. The very long and detailed original story has been simplified, and the type of action, comedy, and cooperation elements that are typical of Lego video games have been added. Still, the overall goal remains the same: You control Aloy as she travels far from home, exploring the wild planet's forests, mountains, and deserts to learn the truth about her past and save humanity. Along the way, she must battle dangerous human minifigs and machines.

Some of Horizon Zero Dawn's most popular characters—Aloy's allies Varl, Teersa, and Erend—are in the new game, too. Unlike in the original game, though, they are all unlockable and playable. Once you complete a tutorial, you can use them to play in co-op mode with friends and family. You can also customize characters' outfits, houses, and even unlock Lego City and Ninjago kits.

Aloy (left)

Everything in Lego Horizon Adventures has been created with Lego bricks and pieces that are available in real life, so the game might even give you inspiration for things to build.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

AARON'S WORLD

Major podcast platforms

A father and his son, Aaron, created this four-season science-themed time travel series. In each episode, Aaron goes on an adventure and learns about prehistoric creatures such as basilosaurus, pterygotus, or postosuchus. He also answers science questions from other kids.

WEBSITE OF THE WEEK

UN-DOUGH

tinyurl.com/TWJUS-UnDough

Test your knowledge of famous landmarks with this site from Google Arts and Culture. If you Zoom in on a region of the globe, a statue or monument made of dough will appear. It won't look exactly like the real thing, though, and you have to try to identify it by choosing from a series of letters.

APP OF THE WEEK

TINY CAFE

Apple App Store, Google Play

In this game, you operate a café where the customers are cats and the coffee maker is a mouse named Dolce. Your tasks include managing the menu and creating rest areas for your mice workers. To make it more fun, you can also customize and expand your café.

LEGO (2); MIKE MERAZ; GOOGLE; NANALI STUDIOS

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Dog Man: Big Jim Begins

By Dav Pilkey
(Graphix)

The 13th book of the best-selling Dog Man graphic novel series opens with Big Jim and Grampa in cat jail. Big Jim reveals a secret about his past. When Big Jim was a baby, his father saw a UFO. Before the UFO flew away, it dropped a letter stating that the "chosen one" is supposed to use a ring to "fulfill supa-ancient prophecies and save the universe." But Big Jim's parents couldn't find the ring. Back in the present time, Big Jim transforms into the superhero Commander Cupcake, Grampa turns into Sprinkles, and they escape from jail. All the heroes in town are invited to a mysterious party. But the Space Cuties, the new villains featured in the story, put sleeping potions in the cake at the party. Dog Man, Commander Cupcake, and Sprinkles are the only heroes left to save the planet. Will bravery and goodness prevail? And will the ring be found? A big twist may shock readers of the Dog Man series. In the final pages, you can also find how to draw Big Jim, Sprinkles, and other characters by using the step-by-step directions the author provides.

ASK THE AUTHOR

Dav Pilkey

We talked to the creator of the Dog Man series.

What's your favorite part of your new book?
I liked drawing the Space Cuties. I used a different style of drawing based on anime and manga to create them.

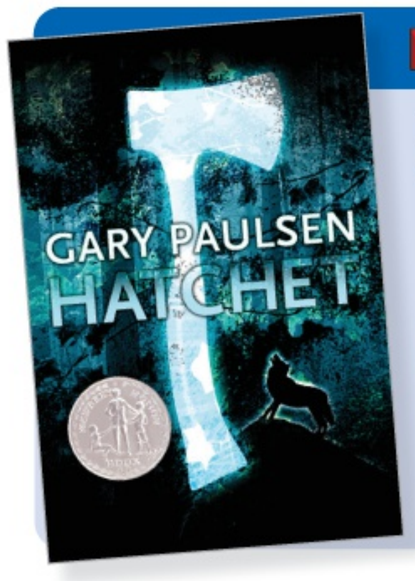
How did you come up with Big Jim's childhood?
I thought it would be a good way to connect my Captain Underpants, Dog Man, and Cat Kid Comic Club universes together, which I'd always wanted to do.

Do you write or draw your stories first?
Sometimes I see a character in my head, draw it, and make up a story based on it. Other times, I see things in nature that inspire me.

Where do you work?
I like to go to my studio on Bainbridge Island, Washington. I have a lot of toys there, which often become models for characters in my books.

Favorite holiday food?
Sweet potatoes.

READER RECOMMENDS



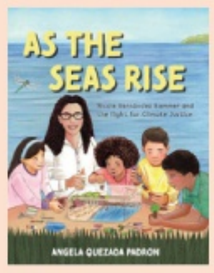
Hatchet *By Gary Paulsen*

"This story is about 13-year-old Brian Robeson, who has to survive in a Canadian forest for 54 days with nothing but a hatchet. He's alone in the forest after surviving a plane crash. Brian learns many things while in the wilderness, and he also makes many discoveries. I really enjoyed this book, and I think other people will too." Wesley, 11, Virginia

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 books about incredible people

You're sure to be inspired by what these Americans have achieved.



As the Seas Rise

By Angela Quezada Padron
(Simon & Schuster)

Environmental scientist Nicole Hernández was born in Guatemala, and her family moved to Florida when she was a child. This picture book explains how her childhood influenced her passion for protecting the environment. *Ages 6–10*

The Leadership Journey

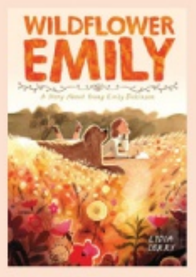
By Doris Kearns Goodwin, illustrated by Amy June Bates
(Simon & Schuster)

A prominent historian describes the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson before they were elected President. The book focuses on their childhoods. *Ages 10–14*

Star Sailor: My Life as a NASA Astronaut

By Charles F. Bolden Jr. with Tonya Bolden
(Candlewick)

Charles F. Bolden Jr. recounts his historic career with NASA. He writes about his missions, including piloting the space shuttle that deployed the Hubble Space Telescope in 1990. The book is packed with photos, diagrams, and more. *Ages 8–12*



Wildflower Emily

By Lydia Corry
(Godwin Books)

Emily Dickinson is considered one of the greatest American poets. This beautifully illustrated graphic novel explores her life when she was growing up. For instance, you'll discover that her favorite subject was botany (the study of plants). The book also incorporates many of Dickinson's poems. *Ages 7–10*

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR PHOTO AND ILLUSTRATIONS: COURTESY OF DAV PILKEY

Try ice skating this winter

This sport is a great way to stay active in cold weather.

Ice skating has been a popular activity in the US for decades, and you don't need much more than a pair of skates to participate. Whether you're brand-new to ice skating or have skated a handful of times, you can follow a few steps to getting more comfortable on the ice and having fun. Here are some suggestions.

Choose your skates

The two main types of ice skates are figure skates and hockey states. They have slightly different blades at the bottom, and beginners can use either one to skate around a rink. Most skating rinks rent skates for a small fee, or you could try borrowing a pair from a friend or relative. If you think you may be skating regularly, you could talk to an adult about whether it's worth buying a pair, either new or secondhand.

Lace up for fun!

Follow guidelines

Experts suggest wearing a helmet when you go ice skating. Many people wear a ski or snowboarding helmet or a bike helmet. Elbow and knee pads can also provide protection if you fall. Even if the rink is indoors, gloves will keep your hands warm. (For more tips on what to wear, see the box at right.) Follow all the rules of the rink to protect yourself and others from accidents. Never skate on a frozen pond unless it has been cleared for safety and adults are present.

Get your balance

Once you're on the ice, start by getting comfortable. Most rinks have a railing you can hold onto when you step onto the ice. While holding the railing, push one foot forward about six inches, stand on two feet, and then push your other foot forward. Next, try going from one foot to the other without stopping in between as you move along the ice. Once you feel ready, step away from the railing. Keeping your knees slightly bent to help with your balance, push one foot forward and then another.

Start gliding

Next, practice gliding on skates. Gliding is when you move forward on the ice without moving your feet. Push off on one foot and then the other to gain some speed. Then keep both feet on the ice and see if you have enough momentum to glide. To stop, point your toes inward and slightly angle the blades of your skates down into the ice. If you fall while practicing, don't worry! Push yourself up to standing, and try again.

Ways to stay warm

Protect yourself from the cold while skating with these tips.

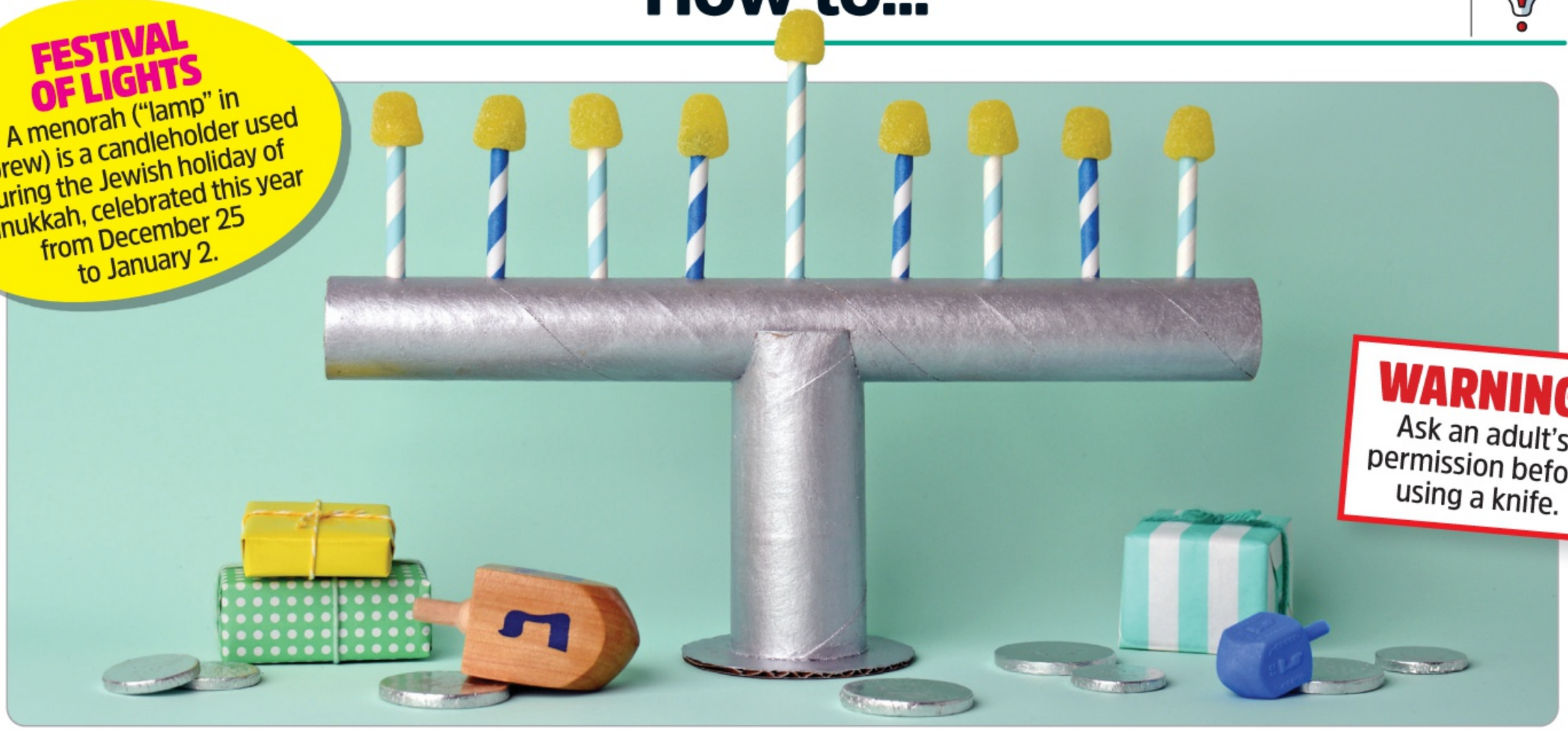
Dress in layers Start with a base layer, such as leggings and a long-sleeve shirt. Then add a sweatshirt. Finally, put on snow pants and a winter coat.

Add accessories Add a hat, gloves, and long socks. Tuck leggings into your socks, and put gloves on before your coat.

Take breaks When your fingers or toes get cold, your nose starts running, and your cheeks feel red, head indoors for a break. Take off any wet and cold clothing so your skin can get dry. You can also drink a warm beverage, such as hot chocolate!

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

A menorah ("lamp" in Hebrew) is a candleholder used during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, celebrated this year from December 25 to January 2.



WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using a knife.

Recycle items to make a menorah

What you'll need

- Pencil
- 1 narrow cardboard tube (such as from a roll of aluminum foil), about 12 inches long
- Ruler
- Craft knife (optional)
- 1 toilet paper tube (or paper towel tube cut down to 4 inches)
- Scissors
- 5 straws
- White glue
- Corrugated cardboard circle, about 3 inches (such as from a box, or trace a jar lid or small bowl)
- Acrylic craft paint
- Paintbrush
- 9 yellow spice drops (or yellow tissue or construction paper)

Instructions

1. Mark the center of the long cardboard tube with a dot. Measure and mark four evenly spaced dots to the left and right of the center (they should be about 1¼ inches apart). You are creating holes for nine candles—one for each of the eight nights of Hanukkah plus one for the candle in the center, called the shamash, for lighting the other candles.
2. Ask an adult to carefully poke the tip of the craft knife or one scissor blade into the tube on one of the dots to make a small hole, spinning the knife around to slowly enlarge the hole. Put a straw into the hole to see if the size is right. The fit should be a bit snug. Repeat with the remaining dots.
3. Make a base: Hold one end of the long tube to the top side of the 4-inch tube, and trace a semicircle to make a spot where the long tube can rest. Cut out the semicircle, and use the scrap as a template to mark and cut a semicircle in the same position on the other side of the tube.
4. Glue the uncut side of the short tube to the center of the cardboard disc to make the base. Let dry.
5. Glue the long tube onto the base, centered. Let it completely dry.
6. Paint the menorah.
7. Cut four straws in half and one down to 6 inches to make "candles." To make "flames," poke the straws into the flat bottom of the yellow spice drops (or glue cut paper flames to the tops).

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK: CONSIDER USING CLOTH NAPKINS

Using napkins made of cloth instead of paper is a simple way to help the environment and save trees. Paper products are made from trees that have been cut down and ground up. Paper factories also cause air and water pollution. And since dirty paper napkins contain grease, they can't be recycled, which means they'll end up in landfills. Americans use nearly 4 million tons of paper napkins, paper towels, and other kinds of tissue each year. Ask your parents about buying inexpensive cloth napkins instead. They are eco-friendly because you can wash and reuse them for many years. This saves money in the long run—and they look great on the table too!

Cloth napkins are eco-friendly.

JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Puzzles

Word search

Can you find all these words associated with Japan? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and can be forward or backward. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

ANIME
ASIA
BAMBOO
BONSAI
CHERRY BLOSSOMS
EMOJI
GODZILLA
HAIKU
HELLO KITTY
J-POP
JUDO
KABUKI
KARAOKE
KIMONO
LANTERN
MANGA
NINTENDO
ORIGAMI
POKEMON
RAMEN
RICE
SASHIMI
SHOGUN
SUDOKU
SUMO
SUSHI
TEA CEREMONY
TOKYO
YEN
ZEN

G
O
Y D N
K J Z A O
P O A N I E T M A
Y T T I K O L L E H I I S
E O M U S L J A E S K
N K B K A U C A H
U I L L A E D E T O E
T L A N T E R N O R I G A M I
H R T I J A A E E I U I N
S E M P O K E M O N J
I C N I O K R K O A U O N
T A I W D H P E O A N H R M Z I U
R S M O S S O L B Y R R E H C
N M A N G A U N D N S
R O S E D U K O D U S
O O B M A B I M S P H

FOUR IN A ROW

Place four of the letters below to complete the first pair of words, in the same order in both words. Use the remaining four letters to complete the second pair of words, in the same order in both words.

F G I N P R U Y

_ R _ E _ D L _

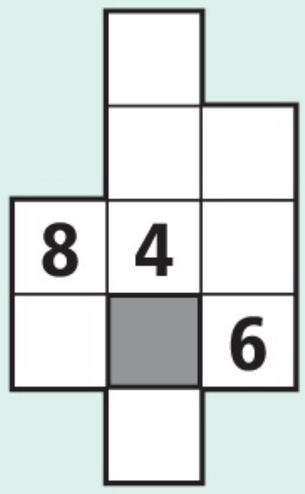
I N _ _ _ I T _

A S _ A _ A _ _ S

_ _ O L O _ _ E

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



FILL IN THE BLANKS

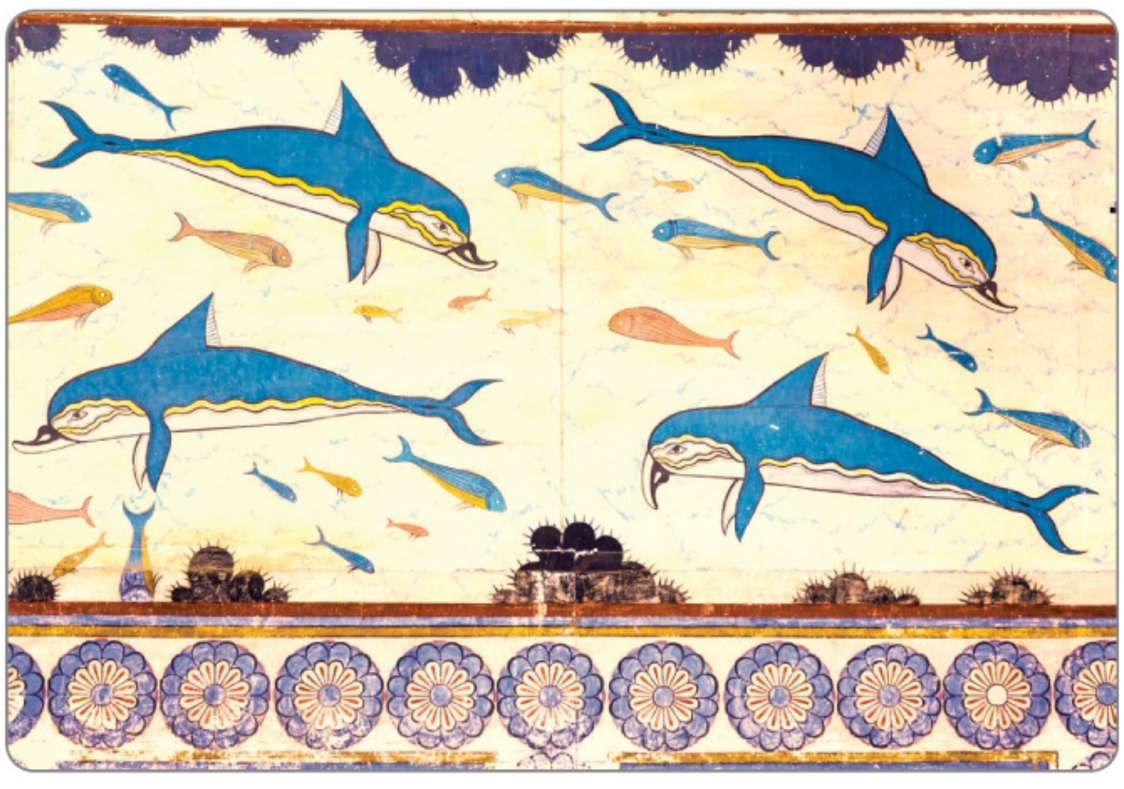
Fill in the blanks in each sentence with two words that are the same except for two letters next to each other that trade places, like EXIST and EXITS. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

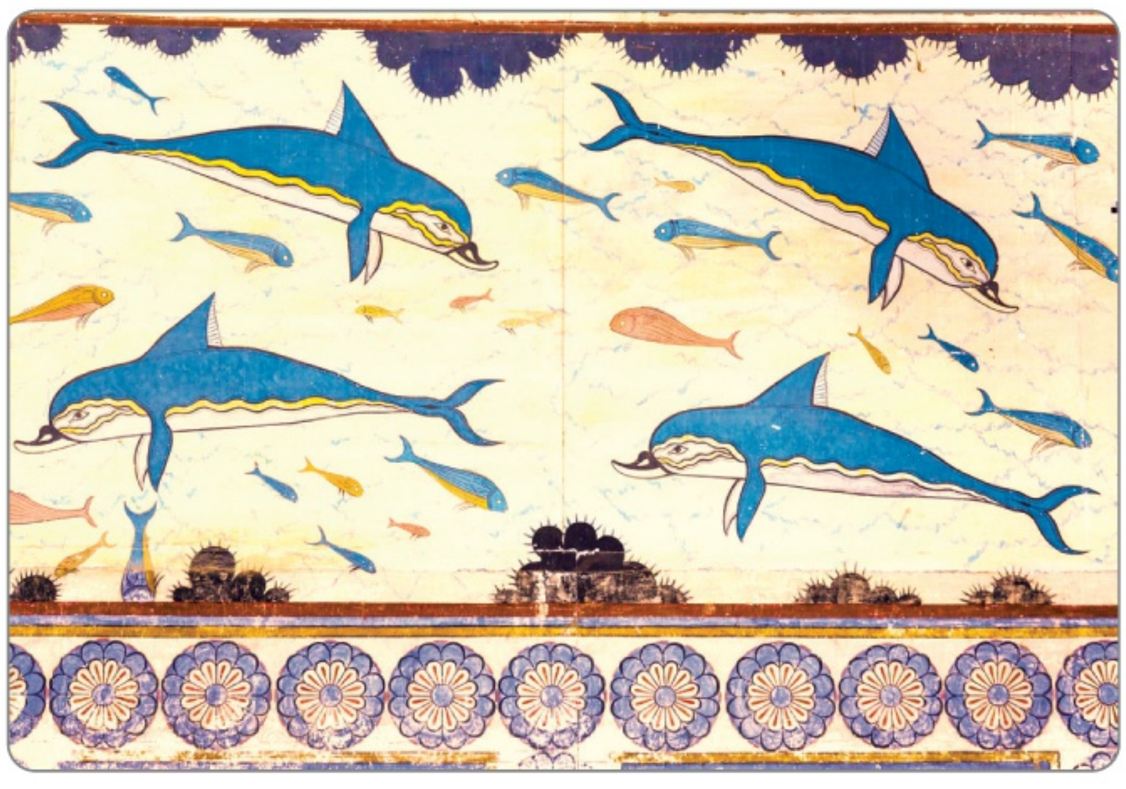
1. My doctor told me to keep a daily food _ _ _ _ _ of everything I eat to see if I'm allergic to milk or other _ _ _ _ _ products.
2. In the fairy tale, the witch's _ _ _ _ _ turns the prince purple, but later the princess _ _ _ _ _ him with a kiss.
3. Even after reading about the pros and cons of using _ _ _ _ _ _ _ power, I am still _ _ _ _ _ _ _ what I think about it as an energy source.

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Spot the difference

These two pictures of a 3,500-year-old Greek wall painting of dolphins appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?





PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

That's unbelievable!

Gigantic drawing honors diversity

A Nigerian artist and doctor celebrated his country with a record-breaking work of art. After traveling around Nigeria, Fola David-Tolaram spent six days drawing a map of the country filled with images of the people, clothing, food, music, and festivals of Nigeria's many cultures. Measuring 10,814 square feet—nearly the size of four tennis courts put together—his creation, *The Unity of Diversity*, is the world's largest drawing by an individual. David-Tolaram said, "This is me showing my people the beauty that resides in our culture."

The emu saved by a "bossy" chicken

At Birdworld park in the UK, a chicken named Nugget has raised a baby emu. When Shrub the emu hatched four years ago, her parents did not take care of her, so keepers placed her with Nugget. The chicken turned out to be "the best foster [parent] Shrub could hope for—busy, bossy, and showing her lots of fuss and care," said Polly Bramham of Birdworld. With Nugget's help, Shrub learned to walk, eat, and drink. Eventually, keepers were able to put her back into the emu enclosure where she now lives with her parents. "Shrub is an amazing lady," said Bramham.

Family gets a blast from the past

A 26-year-old message in a bottle has found its way back to a family in Canada. River Vandenberg, a kindergartner at an Ontario school, found the bottle on the shore of Lake St. Clair. Inside was a note from Makenzie Van Eyk, who had sent it into the lake in 1998 as part of a fourth-grade class project. Vandenberg gave the letter to a teacher, who read it to his current fourth-grade students—including Van Eyk's daughter, Scarlet. "My mouth completely dropped," Scarlet said. "Everyone was like, 'Who's that? Who's that?' And I was like, 'My mother!'"

Dog teachers take swim class

Dog paddle is the swimming stroke many children start off learning, and our canine companions master it naturally. Now some of America's top swimmers are being drilled in dog paddle ahead of the 2028 Olympics. Team USA coaches say they are using the "freestyle dog paddle" stroke to strengthen athletes' core muscles. They are even bringing in special "swim dogs" so athletes can watch the reach-and-pull technique of the stroke to improve their own arm and leg positions. Is this story real, or is it a freestyling falsehood?*

*Fake! Dog paddle is sometimes used by swimming coaches to help with breathing and floating techniques, but they haven't brought in swim dogs to teach athletes to do the dog paddle—yet!

FOLA DAVID; SWNS; ESSEX CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD; SHUTTERSTOCK (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Your turn

Editor's note

Congratulations to 17-year-old Nila Ibrahimi, the winner of this year's International Children's Peace Prize (p3). Now a resident of Canada, she grew up in Afghanistan, where the rights of females are sharply limited. Teen girls and women are not allowed to attend school or work, and they must be accompanied by a male relative when they leave their home. They are not permitted to speak in public. Yet Ibrahimi is being honored for using her voice to stand up for others. At age 13, before her family fled to Canada, she pressured education officials in her home country to repeal a ban against girls singing in public. Now she is the co-founder of HerStory, an organization that advocates for Afghan women. Previous recipients of the Children's Peace Prize include Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai. We applaud all young people who are using their voices to make a difference in the world!

Andrea Barbalich
Editor-in-Chief

Members of Girl Scout Troop 50126, Virginia

Removing trash from parks

"We are Girl Scout Troop 50126. We call ourselves 'The Pickles' and are on a mission to get more trash cans in parks. Our troop recently went to a local park to clean up trash, and we found so much trash. We did our best to clean it up, but we need your help! When you throw trash on the ground, you hurt animals and our future. Please put your trash in cans and advocate to get more trash cans in parks!"

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

What gets bigger as you grow but always weighs the same?

Your shadow

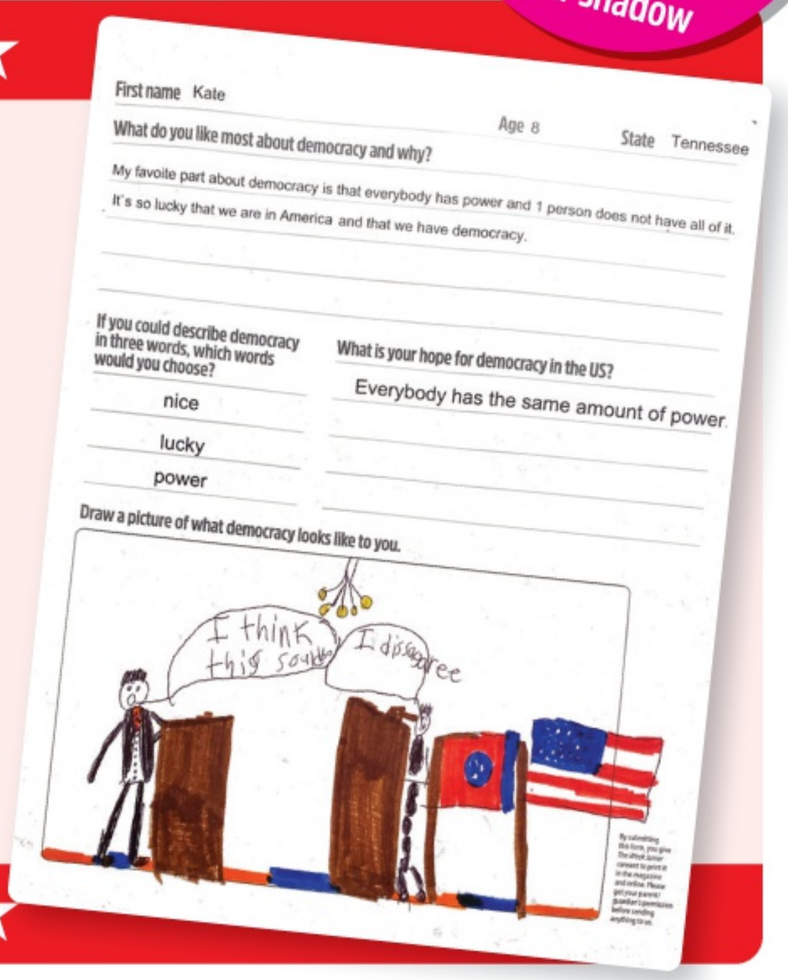
CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Kindness for Kids Foundation

This organization was created to educate children about the power of kindness. It funds programs for teachers to help students understand how treating others respectfully and fairly makes a difference. The group believes that teaching kindness can help prevent bullying, promote sharing, and help students become better learners. Find out more at kindnessforkidsfoundation.org.

Your dream for the nation

Kate, age 8, of Tennessee feels lucky that the US is a democracy. She likes that in a democracy everybody has power, and one person doesn't have all of it. As a reader of *The Week Junior*, you may be forming opinions about your hopes for America. If so, we want to hear them! Go to kids.theweekjunior.com/activities to download a form like the one at right. Fill it out, then have an adult email it to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*. We'll feature some of the submissions we receive on this page in future issues.



First name Kate Age 8 State Tennessee

What do you like most about democracy and why?

My favoite part about democracy is that everybody has power and 1 person does not have all of it. It's so lucky that we are in America and that we have democracy.

If you could describe democracy in three words, which words would you choose?

nice
lucky
power

What is your hope for democracy in the US?

Everybody has the same amount of power.

Draw a picture of what democracy looks like to you.

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I just got my first *The Week Junior*. I love the articles and really enjoy learning about current events." Julian, 14, Alaska

"I loved learning about the pygmy hippo Moo Deng!" John, 10, Missouri

"I made a Lego stage to honor the cricket article that appeared in *The Week Junior*." Aarav, 10, California

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Kym Elder**

School: **Community Montessori**

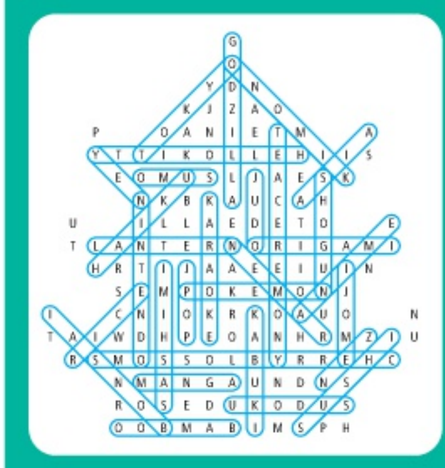
"Kym Elder is a wonderful teacher because she understands what my needs are. She gives me challenging work but also provides me with the tools and help I need to succeed. We have work assignments, but she also gives us space to do creative projects that we're excited about. She makes me feel valued. She makes me strive to be the best student I can be."

Kate, 11, Colorado

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

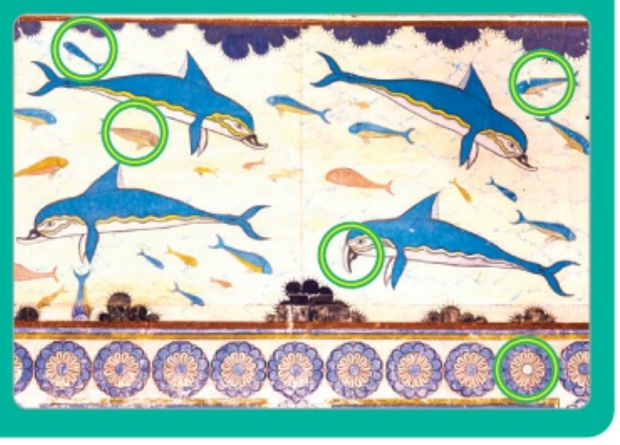
Puzzle answers (from page 26)



Word search
Unused letters: Japanese bullet trains run two hundred MPH.

Four in a row
friendly, infinity
asparagus, prologue

Fill in the blanks
1. diary, dairy
2. curse, cures
3. nuclear, unclear



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** a) 1931 **2** True **3** Commander Cupcake **4** b) Barbra Banda **5** Afghanistan **6** False. It is a hopping vampire. **7** Playing **8** c) Aloy **9** Bird calls **10** c) Wrestling **11** a) 629 **12** False. They behave better if they are younger than 12 weeks. **13** *Kareem Between* **14** c) Tara VanDerveer **15** True

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your full name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 The first Rockefeller Center Christmas tree was put up in what year?

a) 1931 b) 1933 c) 1936

a☐ b☐ c☐

2 True or false? A recent study found that fungi may possess their own form of intelligence.

True☐ False☐

3 In *Dog Man: Big Jim Begins*, Big Jim turns into a superhero named what?

4 Who scored the winning goal for the Orlando Pride in the NWSL postseason final?

a) Angelina

b) Barbra Banda

c) Anna Moorhouse

a☐ b☐ c☐

5 The 2024 International Children's Peace Prize winner, Nila Ibrahimi, is originally from what country?

6 True or false? In the new show *Jentry Chau vs. The Underworld*, the *jiangshi* is a hopping werewolf.

True☐ False☐

7 Bottlenose dolphins often "smile" when doing what together?

8 What is the name of the hero in the video game Lego Horizon Adventures?

a) Alia b) Allee c) Aloy

a☐ b☐ c☐

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

9 Samuel Henderson of Oklahoma has gone viral for his imitations of what?

10 In which sport did Anthony Robles win an NCAA championship?

a) Swimming

b) Tennis

c) Wrestling

a☐ b☐ c☐

11 The XB-1 supersonic jet recently reached a speed of how many miles per hour?

a) 629

b) 761

c) 1,354

a☐ b☐ c☐

12 True or false? A study found that puppies older than 12 weeks behave better when meeting cats.

True☐ False☐

13 What is the title of the book that won this year's National Book Award for Young People's Literature?

14 Whose record did Geno Auriemma break to become the coach with the most wins in college basketball history?

a) Mike Krzyzewski

b) Pat Summitt

c) Tara VanDerveer

a☐ b☐ c☐

15 True or false? A chicken named Nugget raised a baby emu at Birdworld in the UK.

True☐ False☐

COURTESY THE PUBLISHER; BOOM SUPERSONIC; GETTY IMAGES (4)

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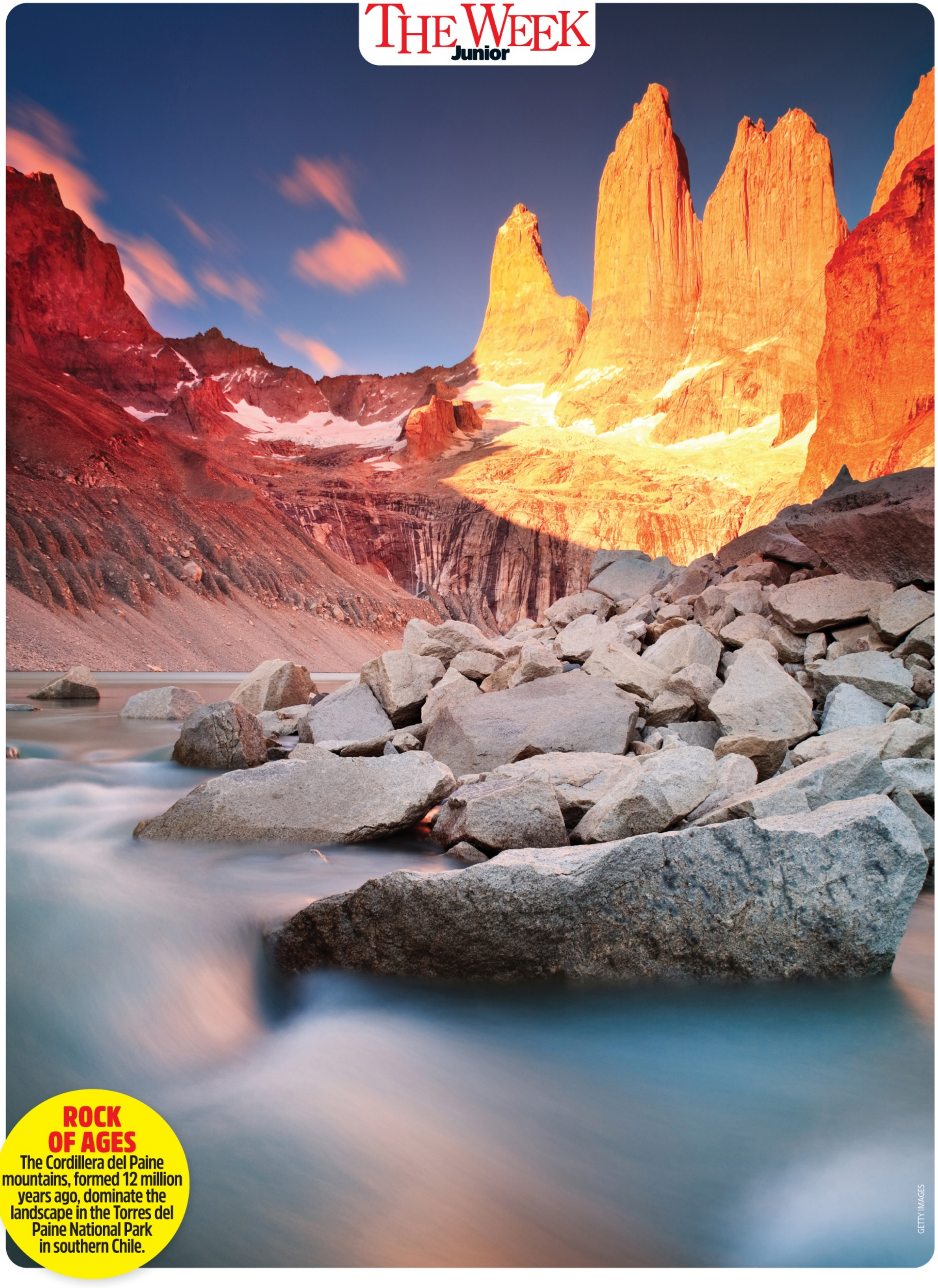

ROCK OF AGES

The Cordillera del Paine mountains, formed 12 million years ago, dominate the landscape in the Torres del Paine National Park in southern Chile.

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